

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1904

July 7, 2015

The Honorable Jack Lew
Secretary
Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20220

Dear Secretary Lew:

I am writing in support of featuring a woman's portrait on our nation's paper currency and to applaud your seeking a woman who was a "champion of our inclusive democracy" for this honor. An ideal choice would be Maine's legendary former Senator Margaret Chase Smith, who served the American people in the U.S. Senate from 1949 to 1972.

Margaret Chase Smith was the first woman to serve in both the House of Representatives and the Senate and the first woman to have her name placed in nomination for President of the United States by a major political party. She was the only woman in the U.S. Senate during most of her 23-year tenure, and her service broke barriers and opened the door for generations of women to come. There are now 20 women serving in the U.S. Senate and 84 women serving in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Margaret Chase Smith is perhaps best known today for her decision to speak out against the excesses of Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin in her famous "Declaration of Conscience" speech. She forcefully defended the right of all Americans to think for themselves and to hold unpopular beliefs. Her Declaration of Conscience was the beginning of the end for Senator McCarthy's small-minded reign of terror. Standing up to that bully was extraordinarily brave at the time, but it was typical of Senator Smith's courageous and independent spirit.

Margaret Chase Smith was also instrumental in cementing the crucial role women play as an integral part of our Armed Services. As a lifelong advocate of women's contributions to our nation's defense, one of Margaret Chase Smith's earliest legislative accomplishments was her leading role in the passage of the Women's Armed Forces Integration Act, which ensured that females serving our nation were treated as part of the regular Army (and received regular Army benefits) as opposed to reserves or volunteers.

Margaret Chase Smith has been my role model and inspiration ever since I had the privilege of meeting her during a visit to Washington when I was a senior in high school. Although I couldn't have known it at the time, that meeting was the first step in a journey that led me to the U.S. Senate 25 years later. I am proud to hold the seat once held by a woman who made such a difference.

I understand that the \$10 bill is next in line for replacement in Treasury's currency cycle. You have been quoted in the press saying that you "don't think it could be justified to break the cycle" to put a woman's portrait on the \$20 bill. Respectfully, I disagree. Women have played a critical role in the social, cultural, economic, and political life of our country since its founding and continue to shape American society for the better today. Surely Treasury can find a way to adjust its currency cycle to acknowledge this critical role by placing the portrait of a woman on the \$20 bill. Doing so would ensure fitting recognition of the important role women have played throughout our nation's history, without stripping Alexander Hamilton of his appropriate place on the \$10 bill.

As the architect of American fiscal, banking, and monetary policy, Secretary Hamilton's portrait should remain on the face of the \$10 bill. Alexander Hamilton came to the United States as an orphaned immigrant, and his energy and intellect fueled his meteoric rise in step with the growth of the nation. He achieved great success as the personal advisor to General George Washington and on the battlefield. After the war, Hamilton wrote the appeal to the states for a Constitutional Convention and later became the only delegate from his home state of New York to sign the Constitution. Hamilton authored the majority of the essays that made up *The Federalist Papers*—the most cited Constitutional treatise by the Supreme Court.

As our nation's first Treasury Secretary, Hamilton laid the foundation for our centralized monetary system and created an environment that eventually led to America's emergence as the world's financial powerhouse. He created the Bank of the United States, the precursor to the Federal Reserve Bank. He advocated for a single currency and proposed that its coins be both beautiful and emblematic, recognizing their value as "vehicles of useful impressions."

I appreciate your attention to this issue and close by once again referencing my role model, Margaret Chase Smith. When she was asked about a woman's "proper place," she put it best: "Everywhere!"

I would add: "and on the \$20 bill!"

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator